SPEAKING PARTS

by

Atom Egoyan

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

CLARA, an attractive woman in her early thirties, approaches a large mausoleum.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LISA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

LISA, a woman in her mid-twenties, is watching television in her apartment. She is playing a tape on her VCR. On the television, the tape plays a scene from a movie in which a concert pianist is giving a recital to a crowded hall. The camera moves slowly past LISA and onto this scene. In the recital hall, one of the extras playing a member of the audience seems to catch the camera's attention. It is LANCE, a strikingly attractive man in his mid-twenties. LANCE'S features are almost androgynous.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - DAY

CLARA approaches the spot where the ashes of her brother, CLARENCE, are kept. She stares at the spot on the wall, which is covered with other names. Beside each of these names is a small button.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LAUNDRY ROOM - AFTERNOON

LANCE enters the tiny room with a basket full of laundry. LISA is waiting for him. LANCE begins to load his laundry into the washer, ignoring LISA completely. LISA leaves the room. LANCE continues to load his laundry into the machine.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - DAY

CLARA, after staring at a spot where CLARENCE'S ashes are kept, pushes the button beneath the inscription of his name. She moves to a small viewing area inside the mausoleum. A delicate bench stands in front of a television monitor. CLARA seats herself on this bench and waits for an image to appear on the monitor.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LAUNDRY ROOM - AFTERNOON

LANCE moves to the dryer, which he opens. From inside the dryer, he extracts a large bouquet of roses.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - DAY

CLARA watches a brief video sequence of her brother CLARENCE.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LANCE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

LANCE at the far end of his apartment. He is arranging the roses in a vase.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LISA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

LISA looks at something we don't we.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - DAY

CLARA stares at the blank video monitors.

INT. HOTEL - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

Close-ups of various items of laundry being sorted. At the end of this sequence, the camera reveals LISA sorting the dirty linen in the laundry room of a large hotel. Sheets, towels, pillowcases and other items are being sorted by hands as they are expelled from a monstrous chute.

INT. HOTEL - GUEST ROOM - DAY

LANCE is making a bed in a room upstairs. During the day, he is a maid at the hotel. His long hair is untied, and he looks almost exactly like an attractive woman. It is important to stress that LANCE is not a transvestite. There is absolutely noting burlesque or 'campy' about his appearance. It is the casualness with which this transition occurs that is most remarkable, and disturbing. In all scenes outside of the hotel, LANCE'S long hair is tied back.

INT. HOTEL - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

LISA pushes a laundry cart out of the laundry room and down a hallway.

INT. HOTEL - GUEST ROOM - DAY

LANCE is scrubbing away at a dirty bidet.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

LISA pushing her laundry cart along one of the hotel hallways.

INT. HOTEL - GUEST ROOM - DAY

LANCE at the foot of a bed, smoothing the sheets. LISA appears behind him.

LISA
Hi.

Pause. LANCE continues to make the bed, ignoring LISA.

LISA
I didn't mean to scare you.

Pause. LISA moves up beside LANCE and presents him with a bundle of hand towels.

LISA
I brought you some hand towels.

LANCE stares at the hand towels, and takes them from LISA.

LISA
They were the last ones. I save them for you.

LANCE moves out of the frame. LISA pauses. Her expression is disturbed and lost. In the hallway LANCE pauses and waits as LISA moves out of the room.

INT. HOTEL - LOBBY - EARLY EVENING

CLARA enters the lobby of the hotel. She moves to the registration desk.

EXT. CLOUD NINE VIDEO STORE - EARLY EVENING

LISA approaches the front entrance of the video store.

INT. TRENDY USED-CLOTHING STORE - EARLY EVENING

LANCE exploring the various costumes on display in this particular boutique.

INT. HOTEL - CLARA'S ROOM - EARLY EVENING

CLARA collapses onto her bed in total exhaustion.

INT. CLOUD NINE VIDEO STORE - EARLY EVENING

LISA wandering through the rows of videotapes, looking for a particular title.

In her hand, LISA clutches an eight-by-ten publicity photograph of LANCE. The camera wanders away from LISA and finds EDDY, a clerk at the store. EDDY, who is in his late twenties, is staring at LISA.

INT. TRENDY CAFETERIA - EARLY EVENING

LANCE has positioned himself in a conspicuous place in this crowded establishment. It is clearly the type of place where one goes to be seen, and LANCE enjoys the type of attention he can expect to receiver here. LANCE has a full carafe of wine in front of him.

INT. HOTEL - CLARA'S ROOM - EARLY EVENING

CLARA has begun to unpack her luggage. She sets a framed photograph of CLARENCE on the desk.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LISA’S APARTMENT - EVENING

Video image, a scene from the video that LISA has taken out. LISA spots LANCE in the background of the shot and puts the VCR on pause. She stares at the frozen image, as the camera slowly zooms onto LANCE.

INT. HOTEL - CLARA’S ROOM - EVENING

CLARA is looking through some photographs. She has places a word processor beside her photograph of CLARENCE on the desk. CLARENCE shares some of LANCE’S facial characteristics. As CLARA looks on the photo there is a brief flash of CLARENCE on video.

INT. CLOUD NINE VIDEO STORE - EVENING

LISA returns the videotape to the store. She drops it on the counter, and begins to leave.

EDDY
How did you like it?

LISA stops in her tracks. EDDY has never spoken to her before.

LISA
It was okay.

EDDY
You can keep it overnight. Most people do.

LISA doesn't respond. EDDY picks up the tape, looks at it.

EDDY
It's only partially wound.

LISA doesn't respond.

EDDY
They bore you?

LISA
No.

EDDY
Then what's the problem?

LISA
There isn't a problem.

EDDY
You always bring them back like this. I mean I can usually figure people out. I try to build up a character profile, watching what customers take out. But the thing about you is, there's no consistency.

EDDY moves to a computer, and punches LISA'S file up on the screen.

EDDY
I mean, look at these titles. You got horror, drama, comedy, even a bit of porn. And you've taken most of these out at least twenty times.

LISA pauses, assessing the situation. She returns to the counter and slowly extracts the eight-by-ten publicity photograph of LANCE from her jacket. On the back of this glossy photograph is a resume.

LISA
(pointing to the resume)
This is my lover.

EDDY
Ya?

LISA
He’s an actor.

EDDY takes the crumpled photograph from LISA. He stares at it.

LISA
That’s a list of movie’s he’s been in.

EDDY checks the movies on the resume with those on his computer screen.

LISA
I like to watch his scenes.

EDDY
Uh-huh. So he’s your...?

LISA
He’s my lover. I’m in love.

EDDY
What about him?

LISA
(staring at EDDY)
You don’t believe me.

EDDY
I didn’t say that.

LISA
We work at the same place. A hotel. That’s his day job.

EDDY
And he does his acting at night?

LISA
And days off. Sometimes he calls in sick.

EDDY
He sounds dedicated.

LISA
He is.

EDDY looks back at the resume.

EDDY
But he's just an extra.

LISA
What do you mean?

EDDY
Well, he may be in these movies, but he doesn't have a speaking part.

LISA stares at EDDY.

EDDY
He doesn't talk in them.

LISA
He's on screen.

EDDY smiles. LISA reaches for the photo-resume and takes it back.

LISA
There's nothing special about words.

LISA begins to walk away. EDDY watches her leave.

INT. HOTEL - HOUSEKEEPER'S OFFICE - DAY

LANCE is meeting with the HOUSEKEEPER of the hotel. The HOUSEKEEPER is an extremely well-kept woman in her mid-forties. Her ASSISTANT is a young man who looks similar to LANCE.

HOUSEKEEPER
And then, there are those who complain that you're not vocal enough. I'm not talking about noises here, or anything crude. It's just that some people thrive on compliments. And, ultimately, that's what we're all here to do. Compliment our guests while they stay with us.

The HOUSEKEEPER smiles at LANCE. He turns his head away momentarily.

HOUSEKEEPER
Now, I have a friend coming in at two.

LANCE
A good friend?

HOUSEKEEPER
Oh, I think you'll find this friend very good.

LANCE
(smiles)
Alright.

HOUSEKEEPER
How are things with Lisa?

LANCE
Fine.

HOUSEKEEPER
Is she still bothering you?

LANCE
Not really.

HOUSEKEEPER
I could have her let go. Find some excuse.

LANCE
(looks away again)
It's not worth it.

INT. HOTEL - BASEMENT - DAY

LISA is cleaning a wall in the hotel basement.

INT. HOTEL - CLARA'S ROOM - DAY

LANCE goes to CLARA'S room to clean it. He notices the word processor, and a script beside it. LANCE leafs through the script.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A tele-conference between CLARA and the PRODUCER of the script that LANCE has discovered in CLARA'S room. The PRODUCER appears on a large video screen. He is thousands of miles away.

There are a number of other people sitting around the long table in the conference room with CLARA, all of them associated with the production that the PRODUCER is orchestrating.

PRODUCER
It’s not difficult to make each other’s lives more complicated, Clara.

CLARA
That’s not what I’m saying.

PRODUCER
It’s what you’re doing.

CLARA gestures to some of the other people in the room with her.

CLARA
They’ve already started casting.

PRODUCER
Nothing’s been finalized. You can make any suggestions you want. We’re here to complement each other’s efforts. That’s why I sent you up there. To become more involved. To help.

CLARA
How?

PRODUCER
Any way you want. If there’s a location you see, if there’s someone you want to audition... feel free. We’re all working together on this. Okay?

Pause. CLARA nods.

PRODUCER
Good. So, how do you like the hotel?

CLARA
It’s fine.

PRODUCER
Didn’t I tell you. It’s very special. So... intimate.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

LANCE slips a manila envelope under the door of CLARA'S room then walks away down the hall. CLARA enters from another hallway and sees LANCE walking away.

INT. HOTEL - CLARA'S ROOM - DAY

CLARA enters her room to find the manila envelope under the door. She moves to her desk and opens the envelope. She extracts the publicity photograph of LANCE. She stares at it for a few moments, then turns to look at the photograph of CLARENCE. She is stuck by the similarity between the two faces. There is a brief flash of CLARENCE on video.

INT. CLOUD NINE VIDEO STORE - EARLY EVENING

LISA and EDDY stand in one of the aisles in the store. She watches him as he casually returns tapes to their places on the shelves. EDDY hands LISA a tape.

EDDY
This one gets taken out a lot.

LISA
Is it any good?

EDDY
I wouldn't be able to tell you.

LISA
Why not?

EDDY
I never watch these things.

LISA
Then how do you know what to recommend?

EDDY
Well I don't. People check out the covers and take what they want.

LISA
Do you like working here?

EDDY
Not this part.

Pause.

LISA
What other part is there?

EDDY
Well, we rent equipment out.

LISA
What for?

EDDY
People want things recorded. Parties, weddings. The usual. And the not so usual. Sometimes I do if for them.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - EARLY EVENING

CLARA is in the process of auditioning LANCE. They are alone. The audition is being videotaped.

CLARA
Is this how you usually get auditions? Slipping your picture under some stranger's door?

LANCE
Well, I don't have an agent.

CLARA
Then how did you get in touch?

LANCE
I work at the hotel. Part-time. As a... consultant.

CLARA
What do you do?

LANCE
I help to book entertainment.

CLARA
So how do you know who I am?

LANCE
Well, I don't... exactly, I mean, I know you're involved with movies. I get a list of names of people in the entertainment field that are staying at the hotel. But I don't know exactly what it is that you do.

CLARA
I could be secretary.

Pause.

LANCE
Then why would you be doing this?

CLARA stares at LANCE. She is smiling.

CLARA
I can think of reasons.

Pause. LANCE shifts uncomfortably in his seat.

CLARA
Well, I'm not a secretary.

LANCE
(nervous laugh)
That's good.

CLARA
So, let's start. I'll read with you. If you could look into the camera?

LANCE
Sure.

INT. CLOUD NINE VIDEO STORE - STORAGE AREA - EARLY EVENING

The storage area of the video store is a mess of monitors, boxes, and various bits of equipment. It is here that EDDY edits the material that he shoots for his customers. Video images of a party: the image of a man sitting down in a chair talking to someone.

ANGLE ON

EDDY, showing LISA a tape he has made of a wedding. LISA is fascinated by what she sees.

LISA
How do you know what to film?

EDDY
You don't. You just go in there with your camera and get whatever you can.

LISA
What's happening here?

EDDY
Oh, I usually try to find a room where I can take people and get them to talk. This is the bride's dad.

The camera moves back to the video's screen. EDDY'S voice is heard off-screen, asking questions of the bride's FATHER.

EDDY
Everyone's having a great time.

FATHER
Thank you.

EDDY
Is she your only daughter?

The FATHER nods. LISA watches the video closely.

EDDY
You've enjoyed a lot of applause in your career, but something extraordinarily dramatic is happening to you today. Can you give us any indication - and I know this is not the best time to ask - but what's going through your mind?

The FATHER is speechless.

EDDY
This must be a very happy day for you.

ANGLE ON

LISA and EDDY watching the monitor.

EDDY
(off-screen)
I can honestly say that this is the best wedding I've ever taped.

LISA turns to ask EDDY a question.

LISA
Is that true?

EDDY
Of course not. You've seen one, you've seen 'em all.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - EARLY EVENING

LANCE reads his audition piece with CLARA. He looks straight at the camera.

LANCE
(reading from the script)
There's nothing to be scared of. They've done this sort of operation before.

CLARA
(also reading from the script)
I couldn't forgive myself if anything happened to you.

LANCE
Why should anything go wrong?

CLARA
The doctor said...

LANCE
There's a risk. That's all. And it's a risk I have to take. You're my sister. I'm not going to watch you die.

LANCE finishes. He continues to look into the camera for a few moments, then turn to CLARA. An ANGLE ON CLARA reveals that she is quite shaken by the reading.

LANCE
Okay?

CLARA
Yes.

LANCE
How was it?

CLARA
Fine.

LANCE
Do you want me to read it again?

CLARA
Alright.

LANCE
I have a question.

CLARA
Yes?

LANCE
Do I find out that you're dying in this scene?

CLARA stares at LANCE. She looks totally lost.

CLARA
What?

LANCE
Is this the scene where I find out what you're dying?

CLARA
No. No. You found out before.

LANCE nods and CLARA smiles.

INT. CLOUD NINE VIDEO STORE - STORAGE AREA - EARLY EVENING

Video image of the bride's FATHER as he continues his interview with EDDY.

FATHER
I'd do anything in the world to make her happy.

EDDY
(off-screen)
Well, I think you have.

FATHER
Thank you.

ANGLE ON

LISA and EDDY watching the monitor.

EDDY
(off-screen)
And now she's leaving the nest, about to embark on a new life. And let me tell you, she'll never forget this.

Video image of the FATHER. EDDY'S last comment has had the desired effect. The FATHER begins to dab at a tear with a handkerchief. EDDY'S camera zooms in to get this action in close-up.

LISA
It's amazing.

EDDY
What?

LISA
That you got him to do that.

EDDY
It's not too difficult. You've just got to know what buttons to push.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

CLARA and LANCE continue their audition. CLARA stares at LANCE. She is almost in tears. LANCE is uncomfortable.

LANCE
(reading from the script)
You don't have to say a word. It's good to see you.

Pause.

LANCE
What that any better? I can try it again.

CLARA
What do you think of the script?

LANCE
I like it.

CLARA
Really?

LANCE
Sure. I mean, it's a bit...

CLARA
Yes?

LANCE
Well, I had a little difficulty...

CLARA
Believing it?

LANCE nods.

CLARA
It’s all true.

INT. CLOUD NINE VIDEO STORE - STORAGE AREA - EVENING

LISA implores EDDY as he rewinds the wedding tape.

LISA
Please, Eddy.

EDDY
Look, it’s not that easy.

LISA
I’ll just watch. You don’t have to pay me or anything. I’ll help you move stuff round.

EDDY
But you just said you wanted to interview people.

LISA
If you think I can. I mean, I’ll do whatever you want me to.

EDDY
Let me think about it.

LISA
Please.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

CLARA and LANCE are wrapping up their audition.

LANCE
I don’t know if I should ask this, but... do you think I might have a chance?

CLARA
It’s not up to me.

LANCE
Oh.

CLARA
Would this be your first speaking part?

LANCE
On film... yes. I mean, I've done some theatre. Nothing too big.

Beat. CLARA turns to face LANCE.

CLARA
So what *do* you do?

LANCE
Like I said, I work at the hotel.

CLARA
Part-time?

LANCE
No...

CLARA
Full-time?

LANCE
Yes.

CLARA
As an 'entertainment consultant'...?

LANCE smiles. Pause.

LANCE
I work in housekeeping.

CLARA
Ah...

LANCE
I was cleaning your room, and I saw the script.

CLARA
So you took a chance.

LANCE
Yes.

CLARA
Do you do that often?

LANCE
What?

CLARA
Take chances.

LANCE smiles at CLARA. There is a strong sexual tension between them.

LANCE
Sometimes.

CLARA
When they're interesting.

Pause. They both smile sensually at each other.

INT. HOTEL - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

The following morning. LISA punches her card through the time-clock.

INT. HOTEL - CLARA'S ROOM - DAY

LANCE is asleep in bed. CLARA has left for a meeting.

INT. HOTEL - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

LISA heads out of the laundry room with her loaded cart to make the first delivery of the day to the maids upstairs.

INT. HOTEL - CLARA'S ROOM - DAY

LANCE begins to wake up, then panics as he realizes where he is and what time it is.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

LISA is pushing her cart along one of the hallways upstairs.

INT. HOTEL - CLARA'S ROOM - DAY

LANCE dresses quickly.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

LISA approaches CLARA'S room. LANCE emerges from the room. LISA spots him.

LISA
Lance?

LISA chases after LANCE, who ignores LISA and runs down the hallway.

LISA
Lance?

LANCE ignores LISA.

LISA
Lance!

LANCE leaps into the elevator just as the door closes. LISA arrives too late and knocks against the closed elevator door.

LISA
Lance!?!

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The production team is seated around the long table, watching the wall monitor. CLARA is playing with her pen. She looks up to see CLARENCE smiling at her for across the room. This shot of CLARENCE is on video, and is recognizable from the montage at the mausoleum at the beginning of the film.

INT. HOTEL - EVELEVATOR - DAY

LANCE shakes his head slowly, left to right.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

LISA rubs her hands in a highly agitated manner as she moves down the hall.

INT. HOTEL - CHANGING ROOM - DAY

LANCE races into the changing room. He puts his clothing into his locker. He has a print of his publicity photograph taped to the door.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Close-up of CLARENCE staring at CLARA. Again, this image is seen in video and seem to be totally out of context with the environment.

Close-up of CLARA. She is broken out of her daydream by the PRODUCER'S voice.

PRODUCER
(off-screen)
Clara.

CLARA looks up to the PRODUCER'S image on the video monitor.

PRODUCER
Clara.

INT. HOTEL - CHANGING ROOM - DAY

LANCE is dressing in front of a mirror.

INT. HOTEL - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

LISA is sorting laundry. She is upset about LANCE.

INT. HOTEL - HOUSEKEEPER'S OFFICE - DAY

The HOUSEKEEPER is talking with her ASSISTANT.

HOUSEKEEPER
I wouldn't see everyone. I mean, what time do you think would be allowable? For instance, from three o'clock until... three forty-four? Think so?

ASSISTANT
Yes. Definitely.

LANCE rushes into the HOUSEKEEPER'S office and sits down.

HOUSEKEEPER
You're very late, Lance.

LANCE
I'm sorry.

HOUSEKEEPER
We thought you might have deserted us.

LANCE
I wouldn't do that.

HOUSEKEEPER
I would like to think that this is an ideal working environment for you.

LANCE
It is.

HOUSEKEEPER
Good. How did you like my friend in 106?

LANCE manages a smile.

HOUSEKEEPER
The feeling was mutual. I've circled in another appointment for this afternoon.

LANCE
What time?

HOUSEKEEPER
During your work hours. Why?

LANCE
I'm just that...
(long pause)
I might have to leave a bit early.

HOUSEKEEPER
I'm sure we can be flexible. My friend was very taken with you.

LANCE
Alright.

HOUSEKEEPER
Do be careful though.

LANCE
What do you mean?

HOUSEKEEPER
This friend was quite smitten. Remember what I told you about distance. Cool mind. Cool heart. Very playful body.

LANCE smiles at the HOUSEKEEPER.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

A tele-conference with the production team. The central figure in this meeting is the PRODUCER of the television show, who appears on the video monitor. He is watching LANCE'S audition piece on a smaller monitor on the conference table.

LANCE
(reading)
This is not an everyday sort of a situation, Julie. You could be dying. Besides, your fear isn't justified. I've talked to the doctor. There's nothing to be scared of. They've done this sort of operation before...

The PRODUCER turns to face CLARA. She stares at LANCE'S image.

LANCE
(off-screen)
...it's a matter of my feeling to you. You can't expect me not to react to this in what would normally be considered an extreme manner...

PRODUCER
(off-screen)
You're sure?

CLARA
Yes.

PRODUCER
He's what you're looking for?

CLARA
Exactly.

PRODUCER
You find him natural enough?

PRODUCER
Well, lets' think about it. We have a few more days.

CLARA
He's my choice.

PRODUCER
And I respect that. Now, did you get my revisions?

CLARA
Yes.

PRODUCER
And how did you feel about them?

CLARA
They're unacceptable. I hate the idea of putting in the talk show. It doesn't add anything.

PRODUCER
Well, it's a unique way of getting the information across. Nothing's more boring than people in a doctor's office, discussing the disease of the week.

CLARA
But it cheapens the point.

PRODUCER
What 'point'? This isn't one of your university lectures, Clara. You're not in a classroom anymore. We're not presenting a thesis. We're telling a story.

CLARA
My story.

The PRODUCER stares at CLARA from the monitor. Undaunted, she stares back.

PRODUCER
Look, this isn't the time to argue.

CLARA
When is?

PRODUCER
When I'm less busy.

CLARA
You're never less busy.

PRODUCER
I can't talk like this.

CLARA
Alright. I'll come there.

The PRODUCER continues to stare at CLARA.

INT. HOTEL - GUEST ROOM - DAY

LANCE is buttoning up his shirt in one of the rooms. There is someone taking a shower in the washroom. A figure can be made out through the curtain, though it is impossible to tell if it is male or female. LANCE leaves the room.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

LANCE is moving down the hall, away from Room 106. He turns the corner and discovers CLARA leaving her room. CLARA is taking her suitcase with her. LANCE stops to talk to CLARA.

CLARA
Hi.

LANCE
Where are you going?

CLARA
I have to go back.

LANCE
Why?

CLARA
Complications. I'm sorry I had to leave so early this morning.

LANCE
That's okay.

LANCE
Are you returning?

CLARA
I'm not sure.

LANCE
Do we stay in touch?

CLARA
Over what?

Pause. LANCE leans forward and kisses CLARA.

LANCE
Us.

CLARA gazes at LANCE.

CLARA
We can still see each other.

LANCE
How?

INT. HOTEL - LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

LISA is mopping the floor. She stops, drinks from a cup.

INT. HOTEL - STAFF CAFETERIA - DAY

LANCE in the staff cafeteria, sitting by himself at a table. LISA appears out of nowhere and sits down beside him.

LISA
Lance, what's going on?

Pause. LANCE ignores LISA'S presence.

LISA
I know how upset you get.

LANCE ignores LISA.

LISA
You're very special. You can't let other people make you feel small.

LANCE ignores LISA.

LISA
Let me love you.

LISA'S hand reaches under the table, finding its way to LANCE'S crotch, which she tries to massage. LANCE'S hand takes hers, and pulls it back to the table. LANCE gets up and leaves, revealing the HOUSEKEEPER, who has been watching this scene, in the background. LISA turns to stare at the HOUSEKEEPER.

INT. HOTEL - HOUSEKEEPER'S OFFICE - DAY

LISA is seated opposite the HOUSEKEEPER. Her ASSISTANT is placing keys onto a board in the background.

HOUSEKEEPER
You see, there's a side of me that sees you all as children. My children. I don't mean that in a negative way. I am concerned about your well-being, and making this as comfortable a work environment as possible. If you accept this notion, then it's not too difficult to understand why I would have favourites. And, some children are naturally more lovable. Others... well, others have to work harder at gaining the attention they feel they deserve. Does that answer your question?

LISA nods her head.

EXT. CLOUD NINE VIDEO STORE - EVENING

Outside the video store, later that evening. LISA enters the frame, and makes her way to the entrance of the store.

INT. CLOUD NINE VIDEO STORE - EVENING

LISA approaches the counter of the store. EDDY is not there. She approaches a CLERK in one of the aisles.

LISA
Is Eddy here?

CLERK
No.

LISA
Where is he?

CLERK
Shooting a party.

LISA
Where is the party?

CLERK
Why?

LISA
He wanted me to help him.

The CLERK looks at LISA suspiciously.

CLERK
To help him to what?

LISA
Help him tape it.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - EVENING

LANCE walks down a darkened staircase and crosses a darkened foyer in the conference section of the hotel. He arrives at the door of the tele-conference room. Using the master key, of which he has procured a copy, he opens the door of this room. He closes the door, then turns on the lights to the room. He walks over to the conference table and takes a seat at the head of the table.

INT. WAREHOUSE BUILDING - EVENING

LISA walks up a flight of stairs. Loud party music can be heard. She approaches a man guarding the door.

GUARD
Ya?

LISA
Is Eddy here?

GUARD
Who?

LISA
Eddy. I think he's taping the party.

The GUARD nods and allows LISA inside, taking a Polaroid of her as she enters the room. People are wandering around the room. Raucous dance music plays. The atmosphere of an orgy.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

LANCE sits in the room, waiting for CLARA to appear on the screen. He takes off his jacket. After a moment, CLARA appears.

CLARA
Hello.

LANCE
(laughs)
Hi.

CLARA
How are you?

LANCE
Fine.

CLARA
I hope this isn't too strange for you.

LANCE
No.
(he laughs)
Did you have a good trip?

CLARA
Fine.

LANCE
When did you get in?

CLARA
A couple of hours ago.

Pause.

LANCE
I missed you.

CLARA
Really?

LANCE
Yes.

LANCE and CLARA stare at each other on the screens.

INT. WAREHOUSE LOFT - EVENING

LISA walks through the party. People are undressed and coupling. A clothed couple holds hands. They smile expectantly. LISA approaches EDDY as he tapes two women embracing.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

The tele-conference room. LANCE and CLARA face each other on the video screens. They stare at each other without speaking a word. Both are partially undressed and are masturbating. When CLARA has an orgasm they stop and smile at each other. LANCE stretches his leg, which has been resting on the table top, and breaks a table lamp.

CLARA begins to laugh. LANCE begins to laugh as well. The laughter dies down.

CLARA
I watched your audition again today.

LANCE
And?

CLARA
It's very good.

INT. WAREHOUSE LOFT - EVENING

LISA stands behind EDDY.

EDDY
What are you doing here?

LISA
I came to see if you needed any help.

EDDY
No.

LISA
Eddy, why are you doing this?

EDDY
Because it's part of my job.

LISA
But it's...

EDDY
Look, we'll talk about this later. Come by the store tomorrow. Okay?

LISA nods, and, staring at the spectacle one last time, leaves the room. She is deeply disturbed by what she has witnessed.

INT. HOTEL - GUEST ROOM - EVENING

LANCE is sitting in a guest's room. He dusts lazily, then he starts to vacuum.

INT. HOTEL - LAUNDRY ROOM - EVENING

LISA works at the laundry press.

INT. HOTEL - CHANGING ROOM - EVENING

LANCE shaves in front of a mirror.

INT. HOTEL - BASEMENT - EVENING

LISA carries laundry down a basement hallway.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

LANCE sits smoking, waiting for CLARA to appear on the screen. She does.

CLARA
Hi there.

LANCE
Hello.

CLARA
How was your day?

LANCE
Alright.

CLARA
What happened?

LANCE
Not much. How are things on your end?

CLARA
Not too good.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - EVENING

LISA is working the night shift. She is delivering some extra towels to Room 106. She knocks on the door.

INT. HOTEL - GUEST ROOM - EVENING

This is the room that the HOUSEKEEPER'S 'friend' is staying in. There is no response to the knock. LISA enters the dark room.

LISA
Housekeeping.

The lights in the washroom are on. LISA pauses outside the washroom door.

LISA
Housekeeping.

Pause.

LISA
You ordered some extra towels.

No response. A person's soft sobs are heard emanating from the washroom.

LISA
I'll just leave them on the counter.

Pause. LISA waits for a moment, rests the towels on the counter, then leaves the room.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

CLARA and LANCE continue their conversation.

CLARA
I'm not the casting director.

LANCE
What do you mean?

CLARA
I'm the writer.

Pause.

CLARA
I was told that I'd have input over casting. That's why I auditioned you. They liked your audition, by the way. You might have the part.

LISA is overwhelmed by this possibility.

CLARA
You won't find out for a couple of days. But you could find out sooner, if you want.

LANCE
How?

CLARA
The producer's assistant is staying in the room next to mine. That's where all the casting information is kept. You can sneak in there tomorrow night.

LANCE
Sneak in?

CLARA
One of the producer's friends is getting married. Everyone will be at the wedding.

LANCE
Are you sure?

CLARA
Positive.

Pause.

CLARA
When you're inside the room, I want you to do me a favor.

Pause.

CLARA
I want you to find a copy of the revised script. It'll be printed on pink paper. Is that clear?

LANCE
Why would I?

LANCE
Well, if you're the writer...

CLARA begins to laugh.

LANCE
What's so funny?

CLARA
I'm only the writer.

INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - EVENING

A lavish wedding party. The first guests that are seen at this event are recognizable from the tele-conference sessions at the hotel. They are CLARA'S business colleagues.

INT. HOTEL - SMALL ROOM BESIDE BALLROOM - EVENING

A small room close to the party. The sounds of the celebration are heard in this room, as EDDY hangs a backdrop and LISA looks through the video camera.

EDDY
Is that clear?

LISA
Yes.

EDDY
You're sure you know what you're doing?

LISA
Uh-huh.

EDDY
I just want an interview with the bride. That's all. Nothing fancy. Just get a sense of her excitement. Okay?

LISA
Yes.

EDDY
I'm trusting you here. These are very important people.

LISA
How did you get the job?

EDDY
I was personally recommended.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - EVENING

LANCE moving down one of the hallways at the hotel, towards the room he will break into. He arrives at the door, and extracts the key from his pocket.

INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - EVENING

LISA is floating through the crowd at the party. There are a number of other people there also taping the event. She seems slightly dazed by the commotion. She talks to an older man, recognizable as the FATHER from the video in Scenes 35 and 37.

LISA
Excuse me.

FATHER
Yes?

LISA
Are you related to the bride?

FATHER
Not this time.

LISA stares at the FATHER, not sure of where she's seem him before.

INT. HOTEL - GUEST ROOM - EVENING

LANCE enters the guest room where the PRODUCER'S assistant is staying. He begins to look around.

INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - EVENING

The FATHER is leading LISA through the crowded party. Suddenly, on a large screen on one wall of the ballroom, a huge image of the PRODUCER is projected. All heads in the ballroom turn to regard this image.

PRODUCER
(his image addresses the assembled mass)
Hello, everyone. I'm very sorry I couldn't be there to share this special evening with you.

As the PRODUCER continues his speech, the FATHER points out the bride to LISA.

FATHER
That's her.

The camera moves down to show the bride, TRISH -- an odd-looking woman who shares many of LISA'S odd features -- and the groom, RONNIE -- who bears more than a passing resemblance to LANCE. They are listening to the PRODUCER.

FATHER
And that's the groom.

PRODUCER
(continuing his speech)
Most of us are gathered here tonight are in the profession of making fairy tales. But sometimes, these dreams come true, and that's certainly the case when two people as special as Ronnie and Trish get married.

The audience breaks into applause. The PRODUCER also applauds. RONNIE and TRISH kiss. LISA stares at them from a distance.

INT. HOTEL - GUEST ROOM - EVENING

LANCE finds the revised script. He finds a videotape marked 'Final Choices.' LANCE takes the tape and script with him and leaves the room.

INT. HOTEL - SMALL ROOM BESIDE BALLROOM - EVENING

Video image of RONNIE and TRISH. The bride and groom are cuddling each other.

RONNIE
And then I saw her in his little bikini. You remember?

TRISH laughs. The camera moves to show LISA behind the video camera, and the bride and groom in front of the camera.

LISA
Ron, I'm wondering if it might be possible to have a few moments alone with Trish.

RONNIE
What for?

LISA
I'd just like to ask her some questions.

RONNIE
About me?

RONNIE and TRISH giggle hysterically over this notion. LISA waits for them to calm down.

LISA
Would that be okay?

RONNIE
I guess so.

RONNIE kisses TRISH and departs, leaving the bride staring rather vulnerably into LISA'S lens.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

LANCE is watching his audition on a small monitor inside the conference room. CLARA is also watching from the video screen in the room. His audition is audible and visible on the video monitor for the rest of the scene.

CLARA
Congratulations.

LANCE
Are you sure that's what it means?

CLARA
Does it say 'Final Choices' on the tape?

LANCE
Yes.

CLARA
Then that's what they are.

Pause. LANCE tries to absorb the significance of this.

CLARA
Did you find a copy of the script?

LANCE
(holding up the document)
Here.

CLARA
Turn to page 73.

LANCE turns the pink script to page 73.

CLARA
Read me what it says.

INT. HOTEL - SMALL ROOM BESIDE BALLROOM - EVENING

Video image of the bride as she is being taped by LISA. LISA looks through the camera at TRISH.

LISA
Are you ready?

TRISH
I think so.

LISA
What do you see in Ronnie?

TRISH
What?

LISA
What do you see in Ronnie? When you look at him, what are you looking at?

TRISH
(perplexed)
Him.

LISA
Did it come easy?

TRISH
What?

LISA
His love?

TRISH
(giggling)
I'm not quite sure if I get what...

LISA
Have there been times when it didn't seem so... certain?

TRISH
No, I...

LISA
I mean, these things are pretty delicate, aren't they? There's no telling what could happen. One of you begins to have second thoughts and the whole thing can crumble away. And then what?

TRISH stares, dumbfounded, into the camera.

Pause.

CLARA
You can.

INT. HOTEL - SMALL ROOM BESIDE BALLROOM - EVENING

TRISH seems distressed. She and LISA gaze at each other.

TRISH
Why would you ask me that?

LISA
Why not?

TRISH
I don't even know you.

LISA
(this is spoken very fast)
It's just that these sort of questions interest me. I mean, love is about... feeling someone else feeling you, right? But sometimes, you can feel someone else, and you can feel them feeling you, but they may not act that way. In your case, it's the other way around. He says that he loves you, which is great, but I'm not sure if that matters. The question is, 'Do you feel him feeling you the way you feel yourself'?

TRISH
Why should I even think about it?

LISA
Because years from now, when you look back at this tape, your answer might be really... interesting.

The bride suddenly breaks down, and rushes out of the room.

LISA
Hey, hey, come back.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

CLARA explains her plan to LANCE. His audition is still audible.

CLARA
This script is very important.

LANCE
You said before it was based on a true story.

CLARA
It happened to me.

Pause.

CLARA
And my brother.

LANCE
So what can I do?

CLARA
They'll cast you, and... you'll meet the producer. He won't listen to me. He might listen to you.

LANCE
Why?

CLARA
Because you're an actor. You can suggest things you think your character might do.

LANCE
And if he doesn't listen?

CLARA
You can threaten to leave.

LANCE
But I'm nothing to them, Clara.

CLARA
Not until they start shooting. Then you're worth a lot. I mean, they can't cut you out, and they can't shoot everything over with someone else. Do you understand?

LANCE nods.

INT. HOTEL - BALLROOM - EVENING

The groom, RONNIE, is angrily confronting EDDY. LISA stands nearby.

RONNIE
Why is my wife in tears?

EDDY
I'm sorry, I did not talk to your wife. I did not talk to your wife. I'm sorry. I'm going to think about this.

RONNIE grabs EDDY by the collar of his shirt, ready to punish him for upsetting his wife.

RONNIE
I only know one thing --

EDDY
Hey look, this had nothing to do with me.

EDDY points at LISA.

EDDY
She taped her!

RONNIE releases EDDY and turns to LISA.

RONNIE
Where is it?

LISA
What?

RONNIE
The tape!

RONNIE grabs LISA in a threatening manner. She gasps.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

CLARA and LANCE continue their conversation over the sound of LANCE'S audition.

CLARA
Will you do it?

LANCE
I suppose so.

CLARA
You don't seem very enthusiastic.

LANCE
It's just that...

CLARA
Yes?

LANCE
This is a big chance for me.

CLARA
And you don't want to screw it up.

LANCE
(nods)
Yes.

CLARA
Doesn't what I'm going through mean anything to you?

Pause.

CLARA
Do I have to beg?

LANCE
No.

INT. HOTEL - SMALL ROOM BESIDE BALLROOM - EVENING

RONNIE enters to find LISA. He grabs the video camera (still attached to the tripod) and shoves the lens into LISA'S face.

RONNIE
You like that?!

LISA
No.

RONNIE
What?

LISA
No!

RONNIE
Don't do it to other people!

RONNIE throws the camera down and leaves the room. LISA is distraught.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

CLARA and LANCE end their conversation.

CLARA
This is going to end pretty soon.

LISA
What?

CLARA
The line. I only booked half an hour.

LANCE
Oh.

CLARA
You have my number. Call me any time.

LANCE
Okay.

CLARA
What are you thinking?

LANCE
Nothing.

Pause. They stare at one another.

CLARA
And Lance?

LANCE
Yes?

CLARA
Congratulations. You must be very excited.

LANCE
Yes, I...

The line is cut. CLARA'S frozen image remains on the screen for a moment, then fades away. LANCE'S audition tape stops simultaneously. LANCE pauses for a moment, then rises from his seat, about to leave the room.

INT. HOTEL - SMALL ROOM BESIDE BALLROOM - EVENING

EDDY enters the room and approaches LISA, who is sitting on the couch.

EDDY
You okay?

LISA is motionless.

EDDY
Look, I'm sorry about pointing the finger at you.

LISA nods slightly.

EDDY
You see what I mean about it being a bit tricky?

LISA
I lost my objectivity.

EDDY
Well, that can happen.

LISA
It doesn't happen to you.

EDDY
Maybe it should.

Pause.

EDDY
Look, I gotta get back. Can you get home okay?

LISA
You don't want me around?

EDDY
I don't think it would be such a great idea. I'll see you at the shop. Tomorrow. Okay?

LISA nods. EDDY rises and leaves the room. LISA is deeply shaken.

EXT. SUBWAY EXIT - DAY

LANCE emerges from the subway exit and walks off.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

LISA walks down one of the hallways in the hotel. Two ambulance attendants carry the HOUSEKEEPER'S friend on a stretcher out of the room LISA delivered towels to two nights previously. She stops and stares at the body is wheeled past her and down the hall.

INT. HOTEL - DELUXE SUITE - DAY

The deluxe suite that the PRODUCER is staying in. LANCE is meeting the PRODUCER for the first time.

PRODUCER
You're probably wondering how you got the part.

LANCE
Well...

PRODUCER
Lance, I'd like you to meet Ronnie.

The PRODUCER shows LANCE a picture of RONNIE. He is immediately recognizable as the groom from the wedding scene.

PRODUCER
You might notice that you look like Ronnie. That's because you'll be playing his brother. He's the guy you give your lung to.

LANCE
I'm not sure I understand.

PRODUCER
The transplant. You've read the script. You give your lung to Ronnie.

LANCE
But I thought I gave to to my sister.

PRODUCER
There's been a change.

INT. HOTEL - HOUSEKEEPER'S OFFICE - DAY

LISA enters the HOUSEKEEPER'S office for questioning by an unseen officer.

The HOUSEKEEPER is seated at the far end of the office. The questioning officer is identified only by her voice.

VOICE
Please sit down, Lisa. We've had a suicide in Room 106. Were you aware of the person staying in that room? Did you have any contact with him?

LISA nods.

INT. HOTEL - DELUXE SUITE - DAY

The PRODUCER'S hotel suite. The PRODUCER takes a contract from his briefcase and hands to LANCE. TRISH is working at a computer.

PRODUCER
Well, if you don't have any questions, Lance, I suppose we can think of signing this.

LANCE
Shouldn't I have someone look it over?

PRODUCER
I thought you didn't have an agent.

LANCE
I have a friend. A lawyer. I mean, if that's okay with you.

PRODUCER
Sure it's okay with me. As long as there aren't any problems.

LANCE
I'm sure there won't be any.

PRODUCER
When do you think we might have this settled?

LANCE
I'm meeting my friend tomorrow.

PRODUCER
Wednesday morning, then?

LANCE
Yes, that should be fine.

PRODUCER
I'll probably be out of town. But we can meet by conference. Upstairs. Trish will tell you about it.

LANCE
You must be busy.

PRODUCER
I'm shooting three of these suckers right now. But this one's very special to me.

INT. HOTEL - HOUSEKEEPER'S OFFICE - DAY

LISA is being questioned by an unseen officer. The HOUSEKEEPER is sitting behind LISA.

VOICE
Do you know if any of our staff had any contact with the guest? Did you see anyone going into the room? Coming out?

LISA
I don't think so.

VOICE
You're sure?

LISA nods.

VOICE
You said before that you heard someone crying when you delivered the towels.

LISA
Yes.

VOICE
You don't think that they might have been crying over someone like Lance?

LISA
No.

VOICE
And you're positive about that?

LISA nods.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

LANCE reads a newspaper while waiting for a train.

INT. HOTEL - HOUSEKEEPER'S OFFICE - DAY

The questioning comes to an end.

VOICE
Did Lance ever talk to you about receiving any 'gifts' from our guests?

LISA turns to look at the HOUSEKEEPER.

HOUSEKEEPER
Housekeeping staff do not receive gratitude.

LISA and the HOUSEKEEPER exchange stares.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - DAY

LANCE looks up from his paper as the train pulls into the station.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - EVENING

LISA descends a staircase and knocks on LANCE'S door.

LISA
Lance?

LANCE doesn't respond.

LISA
How are you feeling?... I heard you were sick.

LANCE doesn't respond.

LISA
I was just about to watch one of your movies. I was wondering if you wanted to drop by.

LANCE doesn't respond.

LISA
I know you don't think they're anything special... But I do.

Pause.

LISA
Lance, something terrible happened to me today. I could have saved someone's life. But I ignored them instead. Has that ever happened to you? Lance?

INT. MAUSOLEUM - DAY

CLARA is sitting on the bench in front of the monitor, which plays back an image of CLARENCE. It begins as the same video sequence she watched earlier, but then CLARA appears in it with a video camera in her hands. She and CLARENCE smile at each other. The camera pulls back to show CLARA watching this video sequence.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LISA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

LISA is waiting a scene on her television. In his scene, two people are talking to each other at a booth in a crowded dinner. The sound has been turned off, so the dialogue between these two people can't be heard. Behind the head of one of these people, some extras can be seen in another booth. They are out of focus. The camera slowly zooms past the head that figures prominently in the video frame, and onto this group of extras. One of the extras turns to face the camera as he suddenly comes into focus. This figure is LANCE. He smiles at LISA.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - EVENING

LANCE is having a tele-conference with CLARA. He has just described the change in the script to her.

CLARA
That's impossible.

LANCE
It's true. I could read it to you...

CLARA
You donate your lung to your brother?

LANCE
Yes?

CLARA
But that's not what happened.

LANCE
I know.

CLARA
Did you ask him why?

LANCE
I... didn't have a chance.

CLARA
So what happens to the sister?

LANCE
She's not in the script.

CLARA
They cut me out.

CLARA laughs hysterically at this idea, fighting back a breakdown.

CLARA
Did you ask him why?

LANCE
Why can't you?

CLARA
I'm about to be fired.

Pause. She laughs again.

CLARA
Look, you have to tell him that you need a sister. I mean, the part only makes sense if you have a sister, if you donate your lung to your...

Pause. CLARA realizes the folly of what she's suggesting.

LANCE
Hmm...

CLARA
You have to do something.

LANCE
I will.

(MORE)

LANCE (cont'd)
(beat)
Look, it's going to be difficult to keep coming here to see you.

CLARA
You have my phone number.

LANCE
Yes. I'll call you.

CLARA
Promise?

LANCE
Yes.

CLARA smiles at LANCE. The line is cut. CLARA'S image remains frozen for a moment, then fades away.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LISA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

LISA is watching a tape of her television set. Video image of the guest room that the HOUSEKEEPER'S 'friend' committed suicide in. LANCE and the HOUSEKEEPER are having a conversation in this room. A pair of naked legs lies on the floor in the washroom doorway.

LANCE
You can't ask me not to worry.

HOUSEKEEPER
No. But I can ask you to stay calm.

LANCE
If they do any sort of investigating they'll know that I was here.

HOUSEKEEPER
Of course you were here. You're the maid.

LISA
Lance, what's happening?

LANCE suddenly notices that LISA is watching them. He smiles at her.

LANCE
(to the camera)
We're having a talk.

LISA
About what?

LANCE
I can't tell you.

LISA
Why not?

LANCE
Because she wants to keep it a secret.

LISA shifts her gaze to the HOUSEKEEPER. The HOUSEKEEPER, totally oblivious to LISA'S 'presence,' continues chatting to LANCE. His words are not heard.

LISA
What's going on? Answer me!

No response.

LANCE
(to camera. Laughs)
She can't hear you, Lisa.

LISA
Can she hear you?

LANCE
Mm-hmm.

LISA
Then ask her.

LANCE turns back to the HOUSEKEEPER. He begins to talk to her. Again, no sound accompanies the movement of lips. The image begins to go blurry.

LISA
Lance!

The image is less distinct now, but still visible. The sound has been cut, and all that is heard is white noise.

LISA
Lance, do you need any help?

LANCE nods.

LISA
How do I get there?

LANCE beckons LISA beside him.

LISA
Lance!

The video image turns to snow.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The tele-conference room of the hotel. LANCE and the PRODUCER are having a meeting. The PRODUCER is thousands of miles away, and appears on the video screen. LANCE sits with the contract in front of him.

PRODUCER
Can we move the monitor a little to the left please. Thanks. Great. Thanks very much.

LANCE
Two things.

PRODUCER
Yes?

LANCE
First of all, I want a hotel room for the entire length of the shooting.

PRODUCER
Why?

LANCE
I won't be able to concentrate on the role if I stay at home.

PRODUCER
Okay. I'll buy that. What's the second point?

Pause.

LANCE
I don't think my character should donate the lung to his brother.

PRODUCER
No?

LANCE
No, I think it was better... when it was his sister. Like in this first draft.
(MORE)

LANCE (cont'd)
And I also don't like the idea of the TV talk show at the end.

PRODUCER
You don't?

LANCE
No... I think it was better the way it was.

PRODUCER
And why's that?

LANCE
It seemed to be more authentic.

PRODUCER
Mm-hmm. Authentic to what?

LANCE
To the integrity of the story?

PRODUCER
Can you be more specific?

LANCE
I think the author's point is being cheapened.

A tense pause. The PRODUCER stares at LANCE.

PRODUCER
Do you know who I am?

LANCE
Yes.

PRODUCER
Do you have any idea of the sort of background I bring to a project like this?

LANCE
Yes.

PRODUCER
You probably used to watch some of my shows when you were a kid. Right?

LANCE laughs uncomfortably.

PRODUCER
Did you watch television when you were a kid?

LANCE
(laughs)
Yes.

PRODUCER
Then you used to watch some of my shows.

LANCE
So what's your point?

PRODUCER
My 'point' is who the fuck do you think you are?

LANCE
All I'm suggesting...

PRODUCER
You've been talking to Clara, haven't you?

Pause. LANCE nods. The PRODUCER suddenly changes tone, becoming much calmer.

PRODUCER
Look, I just want to make sure that we're working with the best script possible. Do you understand?

LANCE
But it's a personal story...

PRODUCER
Of course it is. It's a very personal story, and I respect that. I just want to make sure that it works as a story. That's my job. I'm giving a lot to this show. I'm directing it. I'm even going to act in it. I know it was a traumatic event for Clara -- she was close to her brother. A man gives up a lung to save his sister's life. This is an extraordinary event, isn't it?

LANCE nods.

PRODUCER
And he dies as a result. This moves me, Lance. This moves me so much I want to make it into a very fine film. Something I can share with millions of people.

LANCE
Her brother actually died?

PRODUCER
She didn't tell you.

LANCE shakes his head.

PRODUCER
Tragic.

Pause.

PRODUCER
Clara's script deals with what she went through, but that wasn't what interested me. So I optioned her story, and made it mine. And a movie that takes the form of a talk show it very original, Lance. I'd watch it. And people have always watched what I'd like to watch. You have. Ever since you were a kid. Right?

LANCE nods.

PRODUCER
So, are you ready to sign the contact now, or not?

LANCE pauses, then nods.

PRODUCER
Okay, then sign it.

LANCE and the PRODUCER stare at each other. LANCE looks at the contract, then signs it.

PRODUCER
Good. I'll see you on set.

The conference ends. LANCE sits back, closes his eyes. Video image of an outdoor movie location and an empty director's chair. The PRODUCER is seen walking away. As LANCE leaves the room, his answering machine message is heard.

LANCE
Hi, Lance isn't right now. Please leave a message.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LANCE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Shot of LANCE'S answering machine, which sits on a table next to LISA'S roses, recording a phonecall. LANCE is seen elsewhere, having his hair cut for the film.

CLARA
(voice-over)
Hi. I just watched your audition again today. I'm dying to see you in the film. Lance... why aren't you returning my messages? I have to know what he said. Do you, do you care about me at all? Do you know what I'm going through? Do...

LANCE stares into the mirror.

INT. CLOUD NINE VIDEO STORE - EVENING

LISA returns a tape. EDDY stares at her. LISA stares back at EDDY. Her expression is wild and out of joint.

EDDY
You haven't been getting enough sleep.

LISA
The tape is different.

EDDY
What do you mean?

LISA
The tape is different!

EDDY
Alright. Calm down. I'll have a look at it.

LISA
Eddy, I saw things. Things I hadn't seen before.

EDDY
What? Other meanings?

LISA
Yes.

EDDY
I guess that's normal.

LISA
And other scenes.

EDDY
That's not possible.

Pause. LISA looks down.

EDDY
Listen, I think it would be a good idea if you cooled off these tapes for awhile. Get some sleep.

LISA
(looking up)
He's suffering, Eddy.

EDDY
Who?

LISA
Lance.

LISA turns to leave.

EDDY
Lisa...

LISA stops. She slowly turns around.

EDDY
(shaking his head)
Get some sleep.

LISA walks out of the store. EDDY'S eyes follow her.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - EARLY EVENING

A large television studio. The PRODUCER addresses a crowd of extras, recognizable as the same extras that have been seen in all the movies that LANCE has appeared in. The extras are positioned as though they are the audience in a TV audience-participation show.

PRODUCER
Now, what I want you to do is pretend that this is a real show.
(MORE)

PRODUCER (cont'd)
As if it were being broadcast live, and you are actual participants.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - EARLY EVENING

LISA walks down a hallway of the hotel crowded with other hotel staff.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - EARLY EVENING

The television studio. The PRODUCER continues his introduction to the extras.

PRODUCER
Now, the topic of the show is organ transplants, and this is a life-and-death issue. Obviously, I need the tension level here to be quite high. A number of you sitting in the front rows have been told that you have relatives or children who are in need of donors. And the actors sitting up here are doctors who specialize in the type of operations that could save the lives of your loved ones.

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - EVENING

LISA walks down the hallway -- crowded with people coming and going -- towards the door of the room to which she delivered the towels. She opens the door to the room and enters.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - EVENING

The PRODUCER approaches LANCE, who is sitting in the audience. LANCE stands.

PRODUCER
I'd like to take a moment here to introduce Lance. Lance will be playing the brother of David, the man we are watching on the live feed from the hospital. Can we see the live-feed image for a movement?

On a monitor at the front of the studio, a live-feed image from a studio hospital. On a bed lies RONNIE, recognizable as the groom from the wedding.

PRODUCER
Can you hear me out there, Ron? Ron?

RONNIE looks up, nods and waves.

INT. HOTEL - GUEST ROOM - EVENING

LISA closes the door behind her. The room seems to be in exactly the same state as the night she delivered the towels. She looks around, into the washroom.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - EVENING

The television show has begun. The PRODUCER, who is playing the host of the show, is moving through the studio audience. We can hear his voice as we look at the live-feed image of RONNIE in the hospital bed. RONNIE is coughing, and breathing with great difficulty. A nurse is helping them. The PRODUCER holds a microphone in his hand.

PRODUCER
It's obvious that David isn't the only person in this country suffering from this disease, but he is certainly the only one lucky enough to be on national television. And then I suppose the question becomes, 'Who gets on TV to ask for a body organ'? Who decides? Dr. Spencer, is there something you want to say about this?

SPENCER is one of the actors on the panel.

SPENCER
Well, the main problem is getting access to the donors. The public doesn't seem to be aware of the desperate need for organs.

PRODUCER
Okay. Okay. But let's take the case of David. How often does a lung become available?

SPENCER
Not too often. That's because in a trauma, such as, say, a car accident, the lung is one of the first things to get damaged.

INT. HOTEL - GUEST ROOM - EVENING

LISA is walking around the room. She opens a closet door.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - EVENING

The show continues.

PRODUCER
Let's talk to David's parents. Can we move the camera out into the hallway?

The live-feed hand-held camera that has been fixed on RONNIE moves from the hospital room out into the hallway.

PRODUCER
We'll go into the hall and chat there for a second.

As the hand-held camera gets settled, the PRODUCER address the studio camera.

PRODUCER
If you've just joined us, David is a young man desperately in need of an organ transplant.

At this point, the actors playing David's parents and doctor have seated themselves in the hall outside the hospital room. The actor playing the FATHER is recognizable from the wedding.

PRODUCER
I don't mean to make your lives more complicated than they are right now, but something extraordinarily --

INT. MAUSOLEUM - EVENING

CLARA is sitting, bent over, on the bench. A video image plays on the monitor.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - EVENING

The PRODUCER continues.

PRODUCER
-- dramatic is happening to you today.
(MORE)

PRODUCER (cont'd)
Can you give us any indication -- and I know this isn't the best time to ask -- but what's going through your mind?

The FATHER is speechless.

INT. MAUSOLEUM - EVENING

CLARA sitting in the mausoleum.

INT. HOTEL - GUEST ROOM - EVENING

LISA seems to suddenly be aware that she is framed is exactly the same composition that she observed the HOUSEKEEPER and LANCE in in her video hallucination. She turns to face the camera, the eye of her imagination, and begins to move towards it.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - EVENING

The FATHER is still speechless. He removes his glass. Cut to shot of the PRODUCER.

INT. HOTEL - GUEST ROOM - EVENING

LISA approaches the camera. Her face hovers inches away from the lens.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - EVENING

The show continues.

PRODUCER
Can we see David again? Would the cameraperson there go in the room again just one more time?

The hand-held live-feed camera goes back into the room where David, played by RONNIE, lies in his bed.

PRODUCER
However traumatic this may be, even for those of you in the comfort of your homes, I want you to meet David.

Cut to shots CLARENCE on video, CLARA in the mausoleum, RONNIE in the hospital, the family in the hallway and then LISA, who touches the camera in the hotel room. Inserts from this montage re-occur throughout the scene.

PRODUCER
David doesn't want any special attention. He just wants a chance to have his story told.

LANCE stands up from his position in the middle of the studio audience.

LANCE
Excuse me.

PRODUCER
Yes? Who are you?

LANCE
I'm David's brother.

PRODUCER
David's brother?

LANCE
Yes.

The PRODUCER turns to the live-feed image of the parents.

PRODUCER
Is this man your son?

The parents are dumbfounded. They manage to nod.

LANCE
I want to make a donation.

Cut to video image of CLARENCE. Back in the studio, a figure stands up in the audience. It is CLARA. LANCE turns to face CLARA. The film camera zooms onto the image of CLARA in the crowd. The effect is exactly the same as when LISA sees LANCE speaking on her television. The image of CLARA has a hallucinatory quality. CLARA pulls a gun out of her handbag and points it to her head.

Rapid montage of images: the nurse by the hospital bed, leading over LANCE, coughing; CLARA by the hospital bed, leaning over RONNIE; LISA by the hospital bed, leaning forward to kiss LANCE; CLARA with CLARENCE; and images from the earlier montage.

In the studio LANCE'S face is contorted with terror.

LANCE
(out of character, in anguish)
No!!!

The montage ends with a shot of the viewing area of the video mausoleum. It is empty. The monitor on the wall is blank.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER THAT EVENING

LISA climbs the stairs to her apartment. In front of her door, at the far end of the hall, she sees the crumpled body of LANCE. She slowly moves towards this figure. As she arrives in front of LANCE, he turns to look up at her. He is very shaken.

LISA stares at LANCE. She opens the door to her apartment, and enters the hallway, leaving the door open. She sits down in a chair. LANCE slowly walks into the room. LISA does not look at him. He bends down beside LISA and touches her shoulder. She touches his hand, then removes it from her shoulder. She is astonished by his presence. LISA slowly moves her hand to touch LANCE'S face. They kiss.

INT. HOTEL - VARIOUS LOCATIONS - DAY

A quick montage of shots, each a glimpse of a particular gesture. No faces are attached to these gestures. Hands sort soiled linen. Hands smooth sheets against a bed. Used towels are stuffed into a laundry bag. A bathtub is scrubbed. Etc.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LISA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

LISA and LANCE in her apartment, watching the television program that the PRODUCER has made. The show looks exactly as it was seen in the previous shots.

SPENCER
It's very helpful for the patient to visualize a donor. It gives them a certain optimism and, as well, a sense of usefulness.

PRODUCER
Does David have a name for this donor?

SPENCER shakes his head.

PRODUCER
Can we see David again? Would the cameraperson there go in the room again just one more time? However traumatic this may be, even for those in the comfort of your homes, I'd like you to meet David. David doesn't want any special attention. He's just like the rest of us. He wants to be able to live.

On the television screen, the image cuts to a shot of a man rising from the audience. It is the ACTOR that has been hired to replace LANCE. It is obvious from the way this man is shot that these inserts have been shot at a different time from the rest of the show.

ACTOR
Excuse me.

PRODUCER
Yes. Who are you?

ACTOR
I'm David's brother.

PRODUCER
David's brother?

ACTOR
Yes.

The PRODUCER turns to the parents on the live-feed image.

PRODUCER
Is this man your son?

The parents nod.

ACTOR
I want to make a donation.

At this point in the original show, CLARA appeared. But there is no trace of her as the image on the television cuts to a shot of the studio audience applauding. In this shot, taken from the original taping, LANCE is spotted in the middle of the crowd of extras.

LANCE'S mood suddenly changes as he stares at the shot of the audience applauding. He sees CLARA. She is staring back at him. LISA turns off the set.

LISA
It's just the stupid question.

LANCE is still agitated. He turns to face LISA. She moves to comfort him. As she runs her hand over his forehead, he closes his eyes.

LISA
I turned it off.